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# MEMORIAL

OF

# MARVIN WAIT.

# MEMORIAL

OF

# MARVIN WAIT,

(1st Lieutenant Eighth Regiment C. V.,)

## Killed at the Battle of Antietam,

SEPTEMBER 17th, 1862.

WRITTEN BY

JACOB EATON,

(Formerly 1st Lieutenant Eighth Regiment C. V.)

NEW HAVEN:
THOMAS J. STAFFORD, PRINTER, 235 STATE STREET.

1863.

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This Memorial of Lieutenant Wait was originally written for *The Connecticut War Record*, but thinking that the family and friends of the deceased might derive a mournful pleasure from having it in a separate form, the writer has added to the original sketch, and publishes it as a tribute of respect to a brave and deserving companion in arms.

Biographical sketches of the noble men who have fallen in this struggle for national unity and existence, will be of much interest in future years. They will impart valuable lessons, and inspire to noble deeds.

J. E.

# MEMORIAL.

Marvin Wait, the son of John T. Wait, was born at Norwich, January 21, 1843. He received a thorough academical education at the Free Academy in Norwich, and at the Williston Academy in East Hampton, Massachusetts, with the intention of preparing himself to pursue the profession of law,—[the profession of his father, and also of his grandfather, Judge Marvin Wait, of New London, after whom he was named.] He made such proficiency in his studies, that he entered Union College, at Schenectady, in the fall of 1860. Possessing a vigorous mind and tenacious memory, he made rapid progress in his collegiate course. He remained in college till near the close of the second term, Freshman year, when, his health failing him, he returned home, and in March, 1861, went to Europe. He passed nearly five months in this tour, visiting Belgium, Holland, and the North of England. On his return from Europe he was very solicitous to enter the army, but was finally induced to resume his course in college in the fall of 1861. But he was not willing to remain a mere spectator of the great struggle for national unity

and life. His noble heart kindled with a manly, unselfish desire to aid in defending and perpetuating our Republican Democracy. He remained but a short time in college, when he and several other students withdrew, and entered the army. Immediately after returning home, he enlisted as a private soldier in Captain Ward's Company, (D,) Eighth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. At Jamaica, Long Island, he was detailed to act as orderly for Colonel Harland. At Annapolis, Maryland, he was promoted to be Second Lieutenant in Company A, of his regiment, and was immediately detached as a "signal officer," in which capacity he distinguished himself for his readiness to acquire, and for the rapidity and correctness with which he discharged the duties of his appointment. "He served as a member of the 'signal corps' at the battle of Roanoke Island, on Burnside's flag-ship, and at the reduction of Fort Macon," in which engagement he was commended as follows, in the official report of Lieutenant Andrews:

"I was the only officer on Beaufort Station until the 27th inst., when Lieutenant MARVIN WAIT reported for duty. My station was at a right angle with the line of fire, so that I was enabled to judge with accuracy the distance over or short a shot fell. The ten-inch shell were falling almost without exception more than three hundred yards beyond the Fort. Lieutenant WAIT and myself continued to signal to the officer in charge until the correct range was obtained. The eight-inch shell were falling short—we signaled to the officer in charge

of that battery with the same effect. The same was the case with the battery of Parrott guns, which was too much elevated. From the position of our batteries, it was impossible for the officers in charge to *see* how their shots fell, but owing to the observations made by Lieutenant WAIT and myself, and signaled to them from time to time, an accurate range was obtained by all the batteries, and was not lost during the day. *After* 12 *M. every shot fired from our batteries fell in or on the Fort.* At 4 o'clock, P. M., a white flag appeared on the Fort. The proposition to surrender, and the reply, with terms of capitulation, were sent to and from General Burnside, through this station, by Lieutenant WAIT and myself." *

He served under Burnside during his whole campaign in North Carolina, winning everywhere the good opinions of his comrads, and the praise of his superior officers. His versatile talents, his well-stored memory, his vivid imagination, ready command of language, pleasing manners, and frank, generous disposition, rendered him a favorite with the officers and men of his regiment. As an officer, he was prompt, firm, fearless, and patriotic.

When a part of the Ninth Army Corps, under General Burnside, left North Carolina, on July 6th, 1862, Lieutenant WAIT returned to his company, having been commissioned a short time before as First Lieuten-

* The father of the deceased has in his possession a very beautiful "battle flag," awarded to his son by the head of the Signal Department for meritorious conduct in the reduction of Fort Macon.

ant. He returned to Norwich a short time after with the body of Lieutenant Breed, who was detached from his regiment, (the Eighth Connecticut Volunteers,) for service on the "signal corps," and who died at Newport News, Va., in the beginning of an honorable, valiant, patriotic career. Lieutenant Wait rejoined his regiment at Fredericksburg, just before it evacuated that place. He was ever found with his company at the post of duty and of danger in the arduous and eventful campaign in Maryland. He never required his men to endure hardships which he was unwilling to share, nor to face dangers in which he was afraid to participate. The firmness, intelligence, and loyalty peculiar to the sons of New England, were strongly developed in his character, and exhibited in his army life. He possessed those qualities which would have rendered him successful and celebrated in the profession for which he was preparing himself.

We will now briefly consider the closing scenes in his noble life.

During the terrible and mighty conflict at Antietam, his courage, valor, and patriotism, reached their sad but sublime consummation. Here he wrote his claim to honor and gratitude with his own blood. He wrote so deeply and indelibly that the hand of time will never erase it. Being under fire on the morning of the 17th of September, a ball from a rebel battery struck in the midst of his company, killing three men, and severely wounding another. Lieutenant Wait was covered with

blood and earth. The shot produced some confusion in the company, and several of the men commenced giving way. The brave fellow sprung to his feet amid a shower of bullets, and ordered every man back to his post, in the most gallant manner. After this, our regiment occupied a hill crest, on the north side of the Antietam, till nearly 5 o'clock, P. M. We then crossed the historic stream preparatory to charging upon the enemy's right flank. As we ascended the precipitous ridge which skirts the Antietam on the south, I saw and saluted Lieutenant WAIT. As the company to which he belonged was next to the one on the extreme left, and my own next to the one on the extreme right flank, we seldom saw each other on the march. But as the regiment was here countermarched, we passed each other. This took place less than an hour before he was killed. The expression which rested upon his countenance, and his whole manner, are indelibly fixed in my mind. The manly, heroic, determined fire of his eye, and the battle smile of loyalty which rested upon his youthful face, told how sublime was his purpose, how great was his devotion to country. He comprehended the important and stupendous issues of the conflict. He gave all that he could give to the cause of Justice, Law, and Liberty —his young and promising life.

Permit me to briefly refer in this connection to the sanguinary and unsuccessful charge in which Lieutenant WAIT and hundreds of other Connecticut men fell bravely fighting. At half past five o'clock Rodman's

Division of the Ninth Corps was ordered to carry the enemy's position on their extreme right. We had to ascend several parallel ridges of considerable elevation before reaching the rebel lines. The enemy poured a furious and galling cross-fire upon us from two batteries as we were massed at the foot of the first ridge awaiting the disposition of our artillery. The enemy had all the advantage of position, and as their lines were hidden by the hill crests, we could not determine their real strength. After our batteries in advance engaged those of the enemy, we moved on the double-quick over the first ridge, and took a position at the foot of the second. The advancing lines, which consisted of two brigades, here halted preparatory to making the final assault. The rebel host was but a few rods in advance. The First Brigade (Hawkin's) was to charge; the Second Brigade (Harland's) was to act as a reserve. The Eighth and the Sixteenth Connecticut were in the Second Brigade. Beyond the crest which covered our lines was a slight depression or hollow, bounded by another gentle ridge in advance; then came an open lot, skirted by a cornfield to the left, toward the Antietam. On the opposite side of the open field, behind an embankment formed by the road which runs up to Sharpsburg, was posted a rebel brigade. In the cornfield to the left was concealed another rebel brigade. These lines were strongly supported. Thus our slender line was exposed to a murderous fire on the front and on the flank. And it is well known that many of the regiments previously

repulsed on the enemy's left were afterwards massed upon their right, to meet the very charge which we finally made. *Every one who confronted the rebels in the charge upon their right knows that we only failed for want of support.* As the First Brigade became engaged with the enemy, a simultaneous flash of fire and roll of musketry with the terrific thunder of nearly three hundred pieces of artillery blazed and crashed from the right to the left of both armies, a distance of four miles. It was a scene sublimely and terribly grand. The First Brigade was soon swept away by a withering fire. Our brigade was then ordered to advance into the harvest of death. On we pressed over the wounded, dying, dead, and halting within twenty rods of the enemy, poured upon their exultant masses a storm of defiance and death. Shot, and shell, and musket balls hurtled, screamed and hissed through the air. The Sixteenth Connecticut, which was next on our left, did all they could do, and that was little. Having entered the field but a few days before, unused to movements in line under fire, and becoming massed together within a few yards of a concealed foe, they were soon forced, broken and bleeding, back. (The men stood nobly and fought as well and as long as they could.)* The Fourth Rhode Island gave away for some reasons best known by themselves.

* It was asserted by some of the officers and men on the left of our regiment, that the enemy raised the *National Flag*, above the tall, rank corn, thereby deceiving and fatally entrapping the Sixteenth Regiment. I passed the order, at one time, to those on my right, to "cease firing," as we were firing on our friends.

It may seem like interested praise to some, but history permits me to say truthfully that the old Eighth seemed to be fired with immortal courage on the crimsoned heights of Antietam. Its record shows that one half its number there fell either killed or wounded. In vain this out-flanked, decimated regiment tried to roll back the living tide which set against them. Volley after volley they poured into the very front and face of the exultant enemy. Deeds of valor, unwavering courage, even desperation of purpose, could not press back the foe.* Among the bravest who there fought and fell was Lieutenant WAIT. "Just before he was wounded he was seen closing up the ranks of his company and dressing them in line as deliberately as though on dress parade." Capt. Coit, an accomplished officer and most reliable man, wrote as follows, soon after the battle, concerning Lieutenant WAIT's death: "The Chaplain took Lieutenant WAIT to a sheltered spot under the fence," (about five rods in rear of the line,) "and after looking at his wounds left him, telling him he would send an ambulance as soon as possible, supposing that we should be able to hold the field till reinforcements arrived to drive back the rebels. If Lieutenant WAIT had only left the battle of his own accord when first hit in the arm, all would have been well, but he bravely stood to encourage his men still further by his own example, and

* While the rebels were being constantly reinforced on their right by regiments and brigades drawn from their left, not a man nor a battery was sent to our relief. Our men, after being outflanked and severely pressed in front, withdrew slowly and in good order, firing as they went.

at last nobly fell pierced by bullet after bullet." Major Ward, of the Eighth, wrote as follows to the afflicted parents: "When first wounded he was advised to leave, but would not, and before leaving received three shots. I think, however, that his mortal wound was received while being taken to the rear. The loss of your son is a great one to the regiment. No officer could have been more popular, either with the men or with his brother officers. By his soldierly qualities, good spirits and easy manners he had endeared himself to every one in the least acquainted with him. He died in a good cause, and like a brave man." Captain Hoyt, of Co. A, said in a letter to the parents of the deceased, "Lieutenant Marvin Wait fell at his post while urging on his men into that terrible storm of shot and shell. He was a brave, noble-hearted man, and highly esteemed by all who knew him." The unflinching hero was first wounded in the right arm, which was shattered. He then dropped his sword to his left hand; he was afterwards wounded in the left arm, in the leg, and in the abdomen. He was then assisted to leave the line by private King, who soon met Mr. Morris, the brave, indefatigable Chaplain of the Eighth Regiment. The Chaplain then conducted Lieutenant Wait to the fence before alluded to, and private King returned to his company. Lieutenant Wait's last words to private King were, "ARE WE WHIPPING THEM?" * A braver man

* As the enemy advanced on the left flank of our regiment, they delivered an enfilading fire. It was under this fire that Lieutenant Wait was pierced by a minnie ball, (while laying [illegible] wounded behind a low wall,) which passed through his lungs from side to side.

than MARVIN WAIT never confronted a foe; a more generous heart never beat: a more unselfish patriot never fell. Connecticut may well cherish and honor the memory of such sons.

The following Resolutions, expressing the high esteem in which Lieutenant WAIT was held as an officer and companion, and tendering the highest regard and deepest sympathy to the family of the deceased, were adopted, after appropriate remarks, by the officers of the Eighth Regiment, at Pleasant Valley, Md., Oct. 10, 1862:*

WHEREAS, It hath pleased the Ruler of the Universe to remove from our number Lieutenant MARVIN WAIT, an officer whose character for strict integrity, honesty of purpose, and devotion to the cause in which he was engaged, was only equaled by those warm social qualities which were ever the admiration of his many friends, and in token of our regard for the memory of the deceased, we record these, our Resolutions:

*Resolved*, That it is with feelings of deep and unfeigned sorrow that we deplore the death of Lieutenant MARVIN WAIT, one of our most worthy officers, who, by the strictest care and closest diligence to his various duties, gave character and prominence to his position, and around whom continued glories gracefully clustered, until death terminated his brilliant career, on the ever memorable battle-field of ANTIETAM, Sept. 17, 1862.

*Resolved*, That in this dispensation of Divine Providence our country has lost a brave and earnest defender, whose steadfast and courageous demeanor before the enemy commanded the admiration of all; one that shed his blood willingly, knowing that it was in a Righteous Cause, and whose motto ever was, "Peace, while the Rebellion breathes, is dishonor." His conduct was always such as to do honor to himself and honor to his country, and while we mourn his loss and deeply sympathize with his bereaved friends, he is entitled to a nation's gratitude.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these Resolutions be transmitted to the family of the deceased, and to the Norwich Bulletin for publication.

J. EDWARD WARD, *President.*

HENRY C. HALL, *Secretary.*

The following resolutions were passed by the class of '64, of Union College.

At a meeting of the class of '64, of Union College, held Oct. 1, 1862, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

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* The regiment was in an unsettled condition for many days after the battle, therefore the adoption of these Resolutions was necessarily deferred till Oct. 10th.

WHEREAS, It has pleased God in His all-wise providence to remove from our midst a beloved classmate, MARVIN WAIT, First Lieutenant Eighth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers, who, at the battle of Antietam, fighting in behalf of his country, fell gallantly defending the flag we all love, therefore,

*Resolved*, That we tender our warmest sympathies to his bereaved family, and as they have lost a beloved son and brother, so we mourn the loss of a beloved classmate, whom to know was to love and respect.

*Resolved*, That as a token of respect, we wear the usual badge of mourning for the space of thirty days.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these Resolutions be published in the Schenectady Star and Times, and a copy of the same be sent to the family of the deceased.

CHARLES H. TILLINGHAST,
EDWARD B. MAGOUN,
J. ELDER RALSTON,
*Committee.*

ELISHA CURTIS, *Secretary.* D. VAN HOME, *President.*

*From the Norwich Bulletin.*

**Funeral Ceremonies of Lieut. Marvin Wait.**

The funeral of Lieutenant WAIT was very numerously attended, notwithstanding the unpleasantness of the day. There were private services at the house in the forenoon. The exercises at the church in the afternoon commenced at half past two. The coffin was placed in the vestibule of the church, draped with the stars and stripes, and decorated with flowers. On it also were placed a sword and cap, the equipments of his rank. The exercises at the church commenced with the singing of a voluntary by the choir, followed by the reading of the Scriptures by the Rev. Dr. Bond, and a prayer by the Rev. Mr. Arms. After the singing of a hymn, a short address commemorative of the life and services of Lieutenant WAIT, was delivered by Geo. Pratt, Esq., of this city. After alluding to the personal qualities of the deceased, to his kindly heart, his genial disposition, his warm and friendly nature, which made him beloved and popular among all his associates, of his intellectual qualities, which promised so well for the future, the speaker enlarged upon his career as a soldier, of the honor he had won, of the lasting fame that would be his. And speaking of the battle in which he died and the noble part taken by Connecticut regiments, the address concluded as follows:

And now, what more can I say? What words can add beauty to such a life, or what praise ennoble such a death? When we think of those who fell on that field, we count them all heroes—we name them all among the brave.

> "They died like heroes, for no recreant step
> Had e'er dishonored them, no stain of fear,
> No base despair, no cowardly recoil:
> They had the hearts of freemen to the last,
> And the free blood that bounded in their veins
> Was shed for freedom with a liberal joy."

Yes, the names of those who fell will be handed down with imperishable glory and lasting fame. Our children's children shall rise up and call them blessed, for

they died fighting on the side of the Right, in a contest between Right and Wrong.

Who would not be proud to be one of such a brave and immortal band? Who would not be prouder still that where all were so brave, the one they loved became conspicuous for bravery? Such honor, rarely achieved, this young hero won. All alike, officers and soldiers, speak of his dauntless and conspicuous courage. All tell of the way his brave and animating voice rang through the ranks of the men, urging them on to victory. A century, had he lived so long, would have brought him no prouder moment in which to die. Dying, as he did, on the banks of that little creek, then unknown, now immortal, he becomes for us and ours, forever a name and a memory.

True, he lies here, unheeding all our praises, silent and cold in death. But what a sweet and inexpressible consolation it is to the living, that the one whom they mourn died honorably and gloriously. A long life, uneventful and insignificant, is for the many, a glorious death, a lasting and honorable memory is the boon of but a few.

To-day his native town writes him among her list of heroes; his native State does him honor in the person of her Chief Magistrate; the nation thanks his memory as one among those who saved her in the hour of peril. Such honor as we can pay is now his. We bury him here, far away from the field of his fame, in the midst of the scenes he loved so well; knowing this, that although we may die and be forgotten, his name shall be honored and remembered, and as we lay him to rest, our hearts, one and all, say, "Brave spirit, noble young heart, farewell!"

The exercises at the church being concluded, the body was escorted to the grave by the Norwich Light Infantry, preceded by the band, and a long procession of carriages accompanying. At the grave Gov. Buckingham made some touching remarks, enlarging upon the bravery of Lieutenant Wait, and speaking of his own personal feeling toward those officers and soldiers that he had been instrumental in sending forth to the war. He spoke of the glory of dying for such a cause, and especially in such a contest as he died who was then committed to the grave.

The Company then fired three volleys over his grave, the benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Mr. Arms, and the impressive ceremony was over. The assemblage was very large at the funeral. The sympathy felt for the family in this their great affliction, has been, and is, deep and wide-spread. The Mayor and Common Council of the city attended in a body, and the field and line officers of the Twenty-sixth Regiment were also present.*

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* Resolutions, expressing a high regard for the deceased, and profound sympathy for the bereaved family, were passed by the "Common Council" of Norwich'

## ELEGY.

(*Lieut. Marvin Wait fell in the battle of Antietam.*)

BY HOBART BLANC.

His gallant young spirit, so ardent and bold,
Forth has gone on its long march eternal,
And the warm, beating heart is now dead, still and cold,
That o'erran with all feelings fraternal.

The eye that was lighted with honor and truth,
And often with love and devotion,
Is cold as the sod that has covered his youth,
And dark as the depths of the ocean.

His smooth boyish cheek, where the summer's warm breath
Had left but the faintest of traces,
Is pale as the snow at the cold touch of death,
And bereft of its blossoming graces.

He was youthful in years, but let justice be done
To the spirit high daring and tender;
His country can honor, 'mid all her brave sons,
No bolder and truer defender.

Where the iron hail flew like a tempest of wrath,
He stood with the battle storm round him;
Where blood, shed like rain, made a dark, gory path,
The death that had sought him there found him.

It found him—it smote him—Oh! God, that thine arm
Had stretched forth a shield and a shelter,
To ward from his person all evil and harm—
Left there on the red field to welter.

Bear him back from the field where he gallantly fell,
To the shade of the hills of his childhood;
Through the boughs of the maple let symphonies swell
O'er his grave by the green spreading wild-wood.

And the mountain brooks dashing so swiftly along,
As to listening willows they prattle,
Shall chant, as they go, the sad requiem song
Of the soldier who sleeps from Life's battle.

*New York Atlas.*

Thus have I endeavored to honor aright the noble spirit, and to carefully record the heroic deeds of a kind companion and true patriot. The sacrifice which he made was precious, invaluable; it was not in vain. Our best and bravest sons have cheerfully endured privations, wounds; they have met death with sublime calm-

ness and devotion, that others, in the present and future, may live in security, and enjoy the blessings of Civil and Religious Liberty. The names, the deeds, the graves of our patriot dead are sacred—they are the nation's heritage and honor.

Sorrowing hearts and desolate homes are the immediate results of this gigantic struggle; but individual blessing, State integrity, national honor and security, renovation and rejoicing throughout the world, under God's guidance and blessing, will be the ultimate, enduring fruits.

The men who have held domestic comforts and the endearments of home subordinate to their duty to country in this hour of national peril, are the noblest, the immortal benefactors of the human race. They will have lived, acted, died, in the world's greatest and grandest era. Such men may sink to gory graves, but they will be remembered, emulated, honored, in all time. The injured and wronged in all lands will draw moral inspiration from their self-devotion and sacrifice for Liberty, Justice, Right.

I would close with a few inadequate words of sympathy and kindly regard for the beloved and bereaved family from whose happy circle a dear son and brother has been early removed. A life of unusual promise met with a violent but sublime termination. You have laid a precious offering upon the patrial altar. Let this recollection mitigate your sorrow, and in the Divine Father, "who giveth songs in the night," may you find adequate consolation and rest of soul.

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